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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 51st MEETING
(FIRST PART)*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 1 March 1995, at 7 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria)
(Vice-Chairman)

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* The summary record of the second part of the meeting appears as document E/CN.4/1995/SR.51/Add.1.

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In the absence of Mr. Hitam (Malaysia), Mr. Meqhlaoui, Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 7.20 p.m.

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, INCLUDING:

(a) QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

(agenda item 12) (continued) (E/CN.4/1995/4, 7 and Corr.1, 10, 12, 37, 52, 53, 54 and Corr.1, 55-59, 60 and Add.1, 61 and Add.1, 62-64, 65 and Corr.1, 66, 67 and Corr.1, 68-72, 108, 111, 117, 118, 126-128, 131, 133, 136, 138-140, 142-145, 148, 150, 152 and 153; E/CN.4/1995/NGO/3, 16, 19, 20-21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 33, 38 and 39; A/49/394, 508, 513, 514 and Add.1-2, 539, 544, 594 and Add.1, A/49/641-S/1994/1252, A/49/650 and 651)

1. Mr. MELIK-CHAKHNAZAROV (Observer for Armenia) said human rights violations were so common nowadays that the Commission lacked the time to give detailed consideration to each specific case. Newly independent States that only yesterday had been clamouring for the right to self-determination had now become gross violators of human rights, including the right to life.

2. Nagorny-Karabakh had been part of Armenia for thousands of years. When the region had been handed over, against its will and in an unconstitutional manner, to the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, the population had fought for its legitimate rights. Deprived of cultural development, incapable of educating children in the national language and hounded from a land where it had accounted for 98 per cent of the population, the people of Nagorny-Karabakh had nevertheless continued to hope that its rights would one day be upheld.

3. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and in full conformity with the legislation in force concerning secession from that State, the Armenians of Nagorny-Karabakh had held a referendum and proclaimed their independence. In response to that legitimate expression of the people's will, the Azerbaijani authorities had sent artillery and tanks to exterminate the residents of Nagorny-Karabakh and had organized pogroms and the killing of Armenians throughout Azerbaijani territory. Three hundred and fifty thousand people had been summarily expelled from Nagorny-Karabakh without any material compensation whatever.

4. The conflict pitted Azerbaijan against Nagorny-Karabakh. Armenia provided moral, diplomatic and humanitarian support to the population of Nagorny-Karabakh, but did not have any armed units in that region. The embargo and blockade imposed against Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey were thus gross violations of human rights, yet the Commission had so far paid no attention to them.

5. Azerbaijan deployed nearly 5,000 foreign mercenaries in its military operations against Nagorny-Karabakh. It was regrettable that that fact had not been duly reflected in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the

question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. It was likewise regrettable that the representative of Pakistan had sought to represent the conflict in religious terms. Armenia had good relations with nearly all Muslim States, and many Armenian nationals who had fled the genocide early in the century were respected members of the populations of Arab countries. Unlike Pakistan, which apparently was concerned by violations of the rights of Muslims alone, Armenia was deeply affected by all violations of human rights, be they those of Buddhists, Muslims or Christians.

6. Mr. KA (Observer for Senegal) said Senegal welcomed the arrival in Rwanda of international humanitarian aid, United Nations observers to prepare the future work of the judiciary and an impartial committee of United Nations experts to investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law. The investigations carried out by the Special Rapporteur had also been very useful.

7. All the information emanating from Rwanda confirmed that large-scale massacres had been planned and mass exterminations amounting to genocide carried out. The investigations carried out also revealed that summary execution and arbitrary detention had been practised. Those horrors were compounded by the anguish and insecurity of displaced persons in refugee camps.

8. Against that sombre background, various attempts were being made to structure civil society in a way that ensured respect for human rights. He welcomed the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and of a number of non-governmental organizations that had, through great sacrifice, helped to alleviate the suffering of the helpless population. He also paid a tribute to France, whose intervention had saved thousands of Rwandese from the jaws of death. Senegal had played an active role in that respect with a view to contributing to the security of displaced persons, refugees and civilians in Rwanda.

9. The link was growing increasingly close between national reconciliation and forgiveness and the identification, arrest, extradition, sentencing and punishment of those guilty of genocide. The danger that refugees would take up permanent residence in eastern Zaire and that a social explosion would occur in Burundi should not be lost from sight.

10. The path to peace would be long and hard, for society had been shaken to its roots in Rwanda, hatred continued to prevail and civil war remained a constant threat. His country was convinced that respect for human dignity would ultimately triumph. Yet peace in Rwanda would come at a price that the international community should evaluate and perhaps pay. He welcomed the amount of pledges made to the special fund for Rwanda in January 1995 and was of the view that the Rwandese tragedy would be resolved not by arms, but by negotiation and discussion. It was necessary to go beyond humanitarian assistance and launch a full-scale search for solutions, the main element of which must be that the parties directly concerned should engage in discussion with a will to achieve reconciliation.

11. Mr. JINO (Observer for Solomon Islands) said that while the situation on the island of Bougainville was an internal matter for Papua New Guinea to resolve, his country was concerned about the spill-over effects. Of the many islands of Papua New Guinea, Bougainville was the one closest to Solomon Islands. People on both sides of the border shared the same culture and some were even members of the same family. Land and fishing grounds were also shared, and that long-standing relationship had worked to mutual benefit on both sides of the border.

12. The situation had changed in 1989, however, with the outbreak of armed conflict in Bougainville. His country had been relentlessly drawn in and now harboured thousands of refugees seeking medical treatment or fleeing the parties to the conflict. Those factors had strained his country's relations with Papua New Guinea and depleted its economic resources owing to the need to assist the refugees. Solomon Islands had hosted many rounds of peace talks, the last of which had been held in November 1994. Unfortunately, the parties to the dispute had different interpretations of the various agreements reached; a solution acceptable to both sides had not, therefore, been achieved.

13. When negotiations broke down, his country had no power to mediate and return them to the right road. It was therefore time for the United Nations to play its rightful role in restoring peace and basic human rights in Bougainville. His country encouraged the Government of Papua New Guinea to invite the Commission's assistance and the Secretary-General's good offices in promoting further negotiations. The territory of Solomon Islands was always available as a neutral venue for the peace process.

14. Mr. BAGHISTANI (International Committee on European Security and Cooperation) said the Iraqi regime was continuing its violations of the human rights not only of religious and ethnic minorities like the Kurds but also of its own people. Crime was the rule under the Iraqi regime: just recently, an explosion had killed or wounded 160 people. That criminal act had been organized by the Iraqi authorities. Each passing month saw hundreds of people summarily executed, and thousands of Kurds had been expelled from the country. The Iraqi regime should be brought before an international court and tried on grounds of criminal dictatorship. He hoped the day would soon come when the regime would be overthrown.

15. Ms. GRAF (International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples) said that Colombia was at present the setting for some of the most serious and systematic violations of human rights in the world. An average of seven people were killed each day for political reasons, and three died in the internal armed conflict. Every other day, a person disappeared and another was subjected to "social cleansing". Arbitrary detention was rife, torture was endemic, and many human rights activists and lawyers had been killed or had disappeared. The military authorities had begun bringing proceedings on grounds of "alleged terrorist activities" against human rights activists who instituted legal action against members of the military guilty of serious human rights violations.

16. Most of the political assassinations, disappearances and "social cleansing" killings were committed by members of the security forces or by paramilitary units. The vast majority of human rights violations went

unpunished, and the authorities pursued a deliberate policy of covering up responsibility for them. According to the Office of the Procurator-General, investigations of members of the security forces were obstructed by highly-placed members of the military or police.

17. The international community could not simply stand by while Colombia bled to death. How many more killings, how many more disappearances, how many more displacements of families would be required before the Commission fulfilled its responsibility to the Colombian people? Her organization formally requested the Commission to appoint a special rapporteur for Colombia and to include the situation in its agenda under item 12.

18. Referring to the situation in Cyprus, she noted that the problem had remained unresolved for over 20 years despite a succession of resolutions by the United Nations. It was no secret that Turkey did not comply with international human rights standards with regard to its own population, and much less in respect of the Kurdish people within its borders. Her organization nevertheless hoped that, through a further appeal, the Commission might succeed in convincing Turkey to renounce its expansionist course and adopt a less negative attitude towards a just resolution of the problem.

19. Ms. BAUER (Article 19: The International Centre against Censorship) said that systematic violations of freedom of expression in Turkey remained a source of deep concern for her organization. It called on the Turkish Government to cease the threats and harassment directed against the distinguished Turkish writer Yashar Kemal and condemned the series of attacks on the newspaper Özgür Ülke which had culminated in its closure by the Government on 3 February 1995. Given the grave human rights situation in Turkey and the Government's apparent inability to meet its obligations under various human rights instruments, Article 19 called on the Commission to appoint, for an initial period of one year, a special rapporteur to investigate the situation of human rights in Turkey and report to the Commission at its fifty-second session.

20. With regard to Myanmar, her organization called on the Government to fulfil its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It should immediately and unconditionally release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and take steps to honour the results of the May 1990 elections. The Commission should renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for another year, during which he should give particular attention to the use of the law to suppress political debate and deny the right to freedom of association. He should carefully examine all the obligations under international law binding on the Government of Myanmar and include in his next report an assessment of the extent to which the Government was meeting them.

21. The deterioration of the human rights situation in the Sudan since 1989 had been reliably documented. The Government had banned opposition political parties, independent trade unions, lawyers' associations and student organizations, and had suppressed the right to freedom of opinion and of expression. Article 19 called on the Government of the Sudan to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including the right to peaceful dissent, for all the people of the Sudan. It also called on the Government to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and to extend to him no less a degree of

access, cooperation and receptiveness than that which the Commission accorded the representatives of the Sudanese Government. In light of the continuing systematic violations of human rights in the Sudan, Article 19 called on the Commission to renew the Special Rapporteur's mandate for another year.

22. Ms. LOCHBIHLER (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) said that more than 10 people were killed every day for political reasons in Colombia. The painful armed conflict there had lasted for over 30 years. The new Government stated that it intended to make peace with the remaining guerrilla fighters and to stop human rights abuses. But the war continued and atrocities were still being committed against civilians. The guerrillas continued their violent reactions and were responsible for kidnappings, the laying of mines and the assassination of civilians considered to be army collaborators.

23. Paramilitary groups also committed human rights violations. A Communist senator had been assassinated in August 1994 by a newly formed paramilitary unit. Ever since 1989, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions had been recommending that public security personnel involved in paramilitary groups should be removed from their posts. In January 1995, the Government did remove from his post a colonel who had been implicated in the cruel killings perpetrated in Trujillo in 1990 and 1991. But the overall human rights situation had not improved.

24. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances reported that, of the 912 cases it had transmitted to the Colombian Government from 1980 to 1994, 713 were still awaiting clarification. In 1984, 21 new cases had been reported. Human rights violations were tried by the military criminal justice system and therefore went completely unpunished. Colombians had had to look to international tribunals for justice.

25. The Colombian Government had sponsored the ratification of the Second Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts; it had created human rights units within the security forces and established a commission to investigate the Trujillo massacre. On the other hand, it had recently approved the policy of maintaining military jurisdiction over human rights cases. A draft law now under discussion could ensure that officers who carried out forced disappearances continued to be protected by the principle of "due obedience". The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had reported that court proceedings were kept highly secret. Officials notorious for grave human rights abuses continued to perform official duties.

26. Human rights thus continued to be seriously violated in Colombia, and her organization recommended that the Commission should appoint a special rapporteur to investigate the situation. The Colombian situation was extremely complex and would not be easily solved. The many human rights groups and grass-roots organizations working to overcome the violence in Colombia nevertheless looked to the Commission for a clear sign of support and action.

27. Mr. HERNANDEZ (International Association Against Torture), referring to the human rights situation in Guatemala, drew attention to the disparity

between official information and the reality experienced by ordinary Guatemalans. There had in fact been an alarming increase in human rights violations, in contravention of the Government's commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and despite the presence in the country of the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

28. Among the worst human rights violations between November 1994 and January 1995 had been the enforced disappearance of a university professor, the murder, the attempted murder or torture of trade unionists and other activists, and cases of intimidation of MINUGUA staff. Between 20 and 22 February 1995, 22 persons had been extrajudicially executed. All the victims showed signs of having been tortured before being finally killed, which was indicative of the methods used by the army's clandestine units.

29. He fully endorsed the report by the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Guatemala (E/CN.4/1995/15), and especially his comments on the high level of militarization of Guatemalan society, and the existence of the Civil Defence Patrols (PAC) whose violations of the rights above all of the Mayan majority had been cited by United Nations experts. The people of Guatemala hoped that the Commission would call on the Government and army of Guatemala to disband the PACs and end forcible recruitment.

30. Although accounting for the majority of the inhabitants of Guatemala, the Mayan people had been marginalized and their rights violated. He called on the Government to grant constitutional recognition to the Maya as a people, and urged the Commission to consider Guatemala under agenda item 12 and appoint Mrs. Pinto as special rapporteur.

31. Mr. GRAVES (International Association Against Torture), referring to the human rights situation in Iraq, endorsed the conclusions reached by the Special Rapporteur in his report (E/CN.4/1995/56) concerning the inevitability of human rights violations in that country and the widespread abuse of power. The annexes to the report reproduced a number of Government decrees prescribing mutilation as a punishment for various offences including theft, desertion from military service, and certain economic crimes. Those decrees were certainly being implemented and, according to the Special Rapporteur, constituted violations of articles 5, 10 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of which Iraq was a signatory. As the report indicated, those punishments took place in hospitals and represented a clear diversion of limited medical resources. Not only had the decrees been published, but some of the people who had suffered amputations had been shown on Iraqi State television with the evident intention of inspiring fear and maintaining the Government's hold on power. The nature of the punishments and the very openness with which they were proclaimed also suggested psychopathic tendencies on the part of the ruling regime.

32. The International Association Against Torture considered that the Special Rapporteur had presented an accurate and impartial analysis of the situation in Iraq. It therefore called once again upon the Commission to denounce the

oppression perpetrated by the Iraqi regime, and in particular the new decrees providing for mutilation, which clearly violated Iraq's commitments under international covenants.

33. Baroness COX (Christian Solidarity International) drew the Commission's attention to the conclusions her organization had reached concerning the continuing human rights violations in the Sudan.

34. First, Government forces were still attempting to achieve the forcible transformation of Sudanese society, which was ethnically and religiously diverse, into an Arab, Islamic State, in particular through a sustained military offensive against populations in the South and the Nuba Mountains. The devastating effects of that policy were tantamount to attempted genocide. Government offensives during the 1994 dry season had caused terrible suffering for hundreds and thousands of people in and around Nimule, Kajo Keji, Theit, the southern Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains, and the activities of Government-supplied militias around Bahr El Ghazal and eastern Equatoria had similar disastrous consequences.

35. Secondly, many of those military offensives involved deliberate attacks on innocent civilians. On 23 January, she had witnessed the incessant intimidation of civilians by a Government Antonov aircraft. On the previous day, eight civilians had been killed and three wounded in an aerial bombing attack. Similar attacks had taken place in Nimule in June 1994, when she and other members of Christian Solidarity International had been forced repeatedly to take cover from bombing by overflying Antonov aircraft.

36. Thirdly, the mass displacement of people in the South and the Nuba Mountains was the main outcome of the military offensives against civilians. There had been recent reports of a mass exodus and eastward migration from the camps around Nimule, many of the refugees having already been forcibly resettled on previous occasions. An estimated 1.5 million people had died of starvation and disease, and over 5 million had been displaced since the outbreak of the latest phase of the war in 1983.

37. Fourthly, the imbalance of military power in the Government's favour perpetuated the war, and diminished the chances of success of the IGADD peace initiative.

38. Fifthly, the war had devastated the infrastructure of the affected regions and seriously reduced food production. Despite valiant efforts by the civil authorities to maintain essential services, the repeated mass displacement of millions of people, the lack of resources and problems of access for aid organizations had created enormous problems. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people in the southern part of the Sudan were denied food and the most basic amenities.

39. Sixthly, the arbitrary way in which the Government granted permission to the United Nations Operation Life-line Sudan (OLS) and NGOs to enter affected areas had meant that humanitarian aid failed to reach hundreds of thousands of victims of war and famine. In January, the Government had refused to allow

the United Nations and NGOs into SPLA-administered areas in the Nuba Mountains and a number of other areas, resulting in thousands of deaths due to lack of food and medicine.

40. Lastly, Christian Solidarity International was particularly concerned by the plight of people in the Nuba Mountains. In Government-controlled areas, many people were reported to be suffering from enslavement, from attempts to convert them by force to Islam, often by the manipulation of humanitarian aid, and from other gross violations of human rights. People living in SPLA-controlled areas were constantly harassed by Government forces and their villages and crops were being destroyed. Many had been forced to flee, and those unable to do so had often been tortured or killed. Moreover, the Government's refusal to allow NGOs into SPLA-administered areas had resulted in severe shortages of medicines and food.

41. In view of the continuing pattern of human rights abuses in the Sudan, Christian Solidarity International called on the international community, and in particular the States members of the United Nations Security Council to: impose an arms and oil embargo on the Government of the Sudan until such time as it abandoned its attempts to impose a military solution on the peoples of the South and Nuba Mountains; establish air exclusion zones for the protection of the civilian population from aerial bombardment; continue to support the IGADD peace initiative and insist on tangible results to prevent the Government from using the talks to buy time; engage in discussions with banned democratic opposition groups, which represented over 90 per cent of the Sudanese people; enable the people of the South and the Nuba Mountains to determine their own future; ensure access to all affected areas to the United Nations Operation Life-Line Sudan (OLS) and other humanitarian organizations; provide teams of human rights monitors in the North, the Nuba Mountains and the South; and enable the civilian authorities in the South and Nuba Mountains to develop local economic and training initiatives to provide a basis for future development. Failure by the international community to end the military actions of the Government of the Sudan in the South and Nuba Mountains would inevitably lead to a deterioration in an already catastrophic situation and increased political instability in the region.

42. Ms. VALIÑA (Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees) said that her organization was concerned by the human rights situation in several countries of Latin America. In Colombia, more than 10 people had died every day for political reasons since 1988. The continuing crisis had prompted the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and torture to recommend that the Commission should appoint a Special Rapporteur to monitor the human rights situation in that country; her organization fully endorsed that recommendation.

43. With regard to Guatemala, she noted that one of the Independent Expert's conclusions was that the human rights situation in that country still called for close monitoring by the Commission, and proposed that it should be considered under agenda item 12. At any event, the mandate of the Independent Expert should be extended.

44. The human rights situation in El Salvador was precarious, and neither the peace agreement nor the recommendations of the various domestic and

United Nations bodies had been implemented. It was vitally important that the Commission should continue monitoring developments and maintain the mandate of the Independent Expert.

45. In Peru, a state of emergency had been declared and fundamental rights suspended in 11 of the 24 States. The Committee against Torture had already expressed its concern at the large number of allegations of torture and impunity. Her organization believed that the Commission should try to get the Government to invite the Special Rapporteur on torture and the Working Groups on Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit the country on a fact-finding mission.

46. With regard to Haiti, the restoration of constitutional government was encouraging, but the situation remained critical in terms both of civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights. Her organization endorsed the Special Rapporteur's recommendation that consideration of the human rights situation in Haiti should continue under agenda item 12.

47. Lastly, her organization wished to express its concern at the human rights situation in other countries such as Mexico and Venezuela, where the deteriorating situation called for the attention of the Commission.

48. Mr. SOTTAS (World Organization against Torture) said that the legal mechanisms that had been created to curb human rights violations were being increasingly undermined by the inability to take effective action when breaches occurred. In many cases, more efficient use might be made of existing mechanisms, and the human rights situation in some countries did not yet appear to have received adequate attention.

49. One such country was Colombia, where during the past 10 years atrocities had been a daily occurrence, and many individuals fighting for human rights had been summarily executed, including Senator Cepeda, who was assassinated in 1994. Despite a general awareness that human rights violations were increasing, the Commission had yet to appoint a special rapporteur for the country.

50. In Guatemala, 329 people had been victims of extrajudicial executions in 1994. Justice had often been obstructed by the improper use of military law and the culprits had generally enjoyed impunity. The Commission needed to act resolutely by asking the Guatemalan authorities to explain what measures they were taking to end impunity and what specific guarantees were being put in place.

51. In Peru, 640 people had been killed during 1994 as a result of political violence. As in Guatemala, the impunity of the culprits had perpetuated human rights violations, and military tribunals had been empowered to judge both military personnel accused of human rights violations and civilians suspected of treason. To date, no military personnel had been convicted of acts of enforced disappearance. The World Organization against Torture called for a joint visit by the Special Rapporteur on torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

52. In Burundi, increasing tensions had led to fears of further massacres. Reports emanating from Bujumbura had described massacres mainly of Hutu civilians by the army and armed groups loyal to extremist Tutsi factions. Short term measures were urgently needed to put an end to the massacres, and, for the longer term, an international conference should be convened to help create a genuinely democratic system.

53. With regard to the systematic human rights violations taking place in Iran, he noted that none of the Commission's resolutions had influenced the Iranian authorities, who continued to disregard fundamental rights at home and to murder their opponents abroad. The Commission should therefore propose to the General Assembly new measures to force the Iranian authorities to act on the resolutions already adopted by the Commission and other international bodies.

54. Lastly, his organization condemned the atrocities perpetrated against the Kurdish community both by the Turkish authorities and by the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The Turkish authorities appeared to have ignored specific recommendations made by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the Committee against Torture, and it was therefore appropriate for the international community to adopt a resolute and coherent position towards Turkey to force it to respect fundamental human rights.

55. Mr. HAMILTON (Minority Rights Group) focused on three particular areas where minority rights had been abused and which posed a threat to regional peace and stability, namely, Central Africa, Central America and the Northern Caucasus.

56. With regard to the first of those areas, he noted that little had been done internationally to prevent a series of politically motivated, genocidal massacres in Rwanda between 1959 and 1993, and that the Government had not responded to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. There were now fears of a new genocide in Burundi, where Hutu and Tutsi extremists played on the fears that existed in their respective communities. While there were excellent NGO intercommunity projects and the work of the United Nations Human Rights Centre in Burundi deserved high praise, further United Nations assistance was desperately needed, and the report of the Minority Rights Group had called for specific measures aimed at developing a pluralistic democracy, a Government and administration involving all parties, a judiciary and police system trusted by all communities, education to reinforce tolerance, intercommunity development programmes, measures to stop incitement to racial hatred, and the punishment of those who had encouraged intercommunal violence.

57. In Central America, urgent mediation was needed to end hostilities in the Chiapas region of Mexico and neutralize the threat to regional stability. In view of the continuing violations of the rights of the Mayan people in Guatemala, the Minority Rights Group in its recent research report had recommended measures to restore the land rights of the Maya, tackle illiteracy through mother-tongue education, and allow the Maya to participate fully in national planning and development.

58. In the Northern Caucasus, the attack by the Russian army on its opponents in Chechnya had led to the slaughter of civilians. The use of weapons of mass destruction on civilians should be condemned by the Commission in the strongest possible terms.

59. The recent conflict had reinforced calls for the establishment of ethnically defined areas in a region where, despite its ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, communities had until recently existed side by side without intercommunal killings. Serious negotiations were needed on devolution and autonomy, in keeping with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the OSCE agreements.

60. In conclusion, the Minority Rights Group recommended that the Commission should condemn the gross human rights violations in Rwanda, Burundi, Guatemala and Chechnya in the strongest terms; that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities should be used as a framework for peace and reconciliation in Central Africa, Central America and the Northern Caucasus; and that the Commission should call for early action to implement the Declaration regionally and globally.

61. Mr. CARRILLO SUAREZ (Andean Commission of Jurists) noted that although there had been a number of encouraging moves towards democratic government in the Andean region, respect for civil rights at the institutional level, which was crucial to the development and maintenance of the rule of law, was often absent.

62. Particularly serious human rights violations had taken place in Colombia, despite certain formal safeguards introduced with the new Constitution of 1991 and measures announced by the new Government. Between January and September 1994, an average of five Colombians had died every day as a result of their political or trade union activity, and numerous atrocities had been perpetrated by guerrilla groups. The new Government had adopted a number of encouraging measures, including ratification of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Nevertheless, excessive optimism would be out of place. The Senate had rejected legislation making enforced disappearance a crime, as well as provisions restricting the jurisdiction of the military and ruling out defence based on "superior orders". Emergency legislation still provided for secret trials, and public officials implicated in grave human rights violations continued to serve in office, while the present Government, like the previous one, refused to recognise the binding nature of decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The situation called for appropriate attention by the Commission.

63. In Peru, human rights violations were also continuing, although there had been a significant reduction in political violence. In 1994, that violence had claimed 652 victims, over half of them civilians not involved in the armed conflict. Terrorist groups also continued to commit serious violations of fundamental rights. During 1994, local human rights organizations had reported 38 extrajudicial executions and 25 detentions or disappearances. Most of the extrajudicial executions had occurred during a military operation

in the Huánuco district between March and April 1994. During that operation, people in the area had come under rocket attack from helicopters and in addition many had been tortured or murdered or had "disappeared". The Government had attempted to deny the facts despite the evidence, and official inquiries had so far led nowhere. The impunity enjoyed by authors of serious human rights violations was starkly illustrated by the handling of the La Cantuta case, in which nine students and a professor had been murdered by the military. Judicial investigations into the case had been interrupted abruptly by a decree from the highest levels of the military.

64. The application of 1992 anti-terrorist legislation continued to result in the unjust arrest, trial and sentencing of hundreds of people for terrorism or treason, in contravention of the principle of due legal process. Torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment were still in habitual use in detention centres, particularly in areas where a state of emergency had been declared. Nearly one-half of all Peruvians lived in areas where constitutional guarantees were restricted.

65. Lastly, with regard to the situation in Venezuela, the inauguration of a new Government in February 1994 was a positive development, but there had nevertheless been 148 violations of the right to life between October 1993 and September 1994, all committed by the security forces. Seven thousand six hundred and eight people had been arbitrarily detained, mostly as a result of the security operations which were a daily fact of life for the poorest groups of society. Thirty-five cases of torture had been reported as well as over 2,000 other cases of abuse by the police and security forces. All those figures relating to police abuses and the indiscriminate and excessive use of force suggested a general devaluation of human life in Venezuelan society.

66. Mr. RATHORE (World Muslim Congress) said that gross human rights violations in Indian-held Kashmir were continuing. During visits to the refugee camps in Muzaffarabad he had personally met victims of violence, rape and brutality perpetrated by Indian troops. On their behalf, he appealed to the international community to stop the repression of the millions of people in Jammu and Kashmir who did not wish to be part of India and to allow them to exercise their right of self-determination. Since 1990, tens of thousands of people had been killed, imprisoned or were missing, and there had been 4,700 reported cases of rape. The Indian security forces were violating the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Human Rights Covenants and humanitarian law.

67. The people for whom he spoke sought to defend themselves not through violence but by appealing to the Commission, the last beacon of hope for Kashmiris that right rather than might would prevail. During the Commission's current session he and the representative from Indian-held Kashmir had drafted a memorandum and submitted it to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Chairman of the Commission and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, calling for the repeal of draconian laws, the withdrawal of Indian troops, and free access for United Nations human rights bodies, other human rights organizations and international media. Above all, it demanded that Kashmiris should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination through a plebiscite supervised by the United Nations.

68. In conclusion, he appealed to the Commission to send a fact-finding mission to Jammu and Kashmir and to urge the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Kashmir as soon as possible.

69. Mr. PERODIN PEREZ (International Association of Educators for World Peace) said that he and his son had been 2 of the few survivors of the massacre that had been perpetrated by Cuban Government agents on 13 July 1994, when 42 innocent people including 3 children had drowned as they attempted to escape the political repression and extreme poverty to which the people of Cuba were subjected.

70. As they left the port of Havana, high-pressure water hoses had been turned on their boat in an attempt to sink it. Despite the best attempts of the boat's captain the force of the water had swept people overboard. Other vessels had joined in the attack and eventually the boat sank. His wife and 11-year-old son had died during the incident. The survivors had been picked up by the Cuban authorities.

71. Mr. KHOURI (Union of Arab Jurists) said that the Union had noted with concern the rapid deterioration in the human rights situation in certain Arab countries, including the occupied Arab territories, in 1994. Since then, the situation had deteriorated further, violations had increased and the lives of many innocent victims had been claimed.

72. Several steps had to be taken in the interest of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Arab world. First, courts of exception should be eliminated and the role of the judiciary consolidated. Second, all political prisoners should be released. Third, all persons should have the right to a fair trial. Fourth, restrictions on trade unions should be lifted so that they could defend their members and ensure that their human rights were respected. Fifth, torture and hostage-taking should be ended immediately and sixth, freedom of expression should be guaranteed.

73. With regard to the sanctions against Iraq, certain NGOs had drawn up a document stating that, on the basis of the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments, such sanctions should be lifted. Those sanctions had been in place for four years but were no longer justified because the reasons for which they had been imposed by the Security Council no longer existed. Iraqi civilians were the ones most affected by the sanctions which, inter alia, had led to violations of human rights. The Commission on Human Rights should do its utmost to encourage the international community to remove the sanctions and urge the Security Council in particular to make the first step by removing the embargo on imports of petroleum and petroleum products from Iraq once Iraq had complied with the provisions of paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991).

74. Ms. NUÑEZ DE ESCORCIA (Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Central America) said that, in Central America, the neo-liberal policies being implemented by Governments were violating the economic, social and cultural rights of millions of men and women.

75. Although such economic repression was common to all Central American countries, the enjoyment of civil and political rights varied. For example, in Honduras in 1994, threats had been made against human rights activists, and summary executions carried out. In El Salvador, violations included arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial executions and death threats, which were compounded by the activities of illegal groups and death squads. The report of the Independent Expert, Mr. Pedro Nikken, on developments in the human rights situation in El Salvador (E/CN.4/1995/88) stated that such groups had a high degree of organization, logistics and support, in some cases, from State officials.

76. In Nicaragua, the implementation of a structural adjustment policy which was causing serious hardships for most of the population provided a backdrop against which civil and political rights were being violated. Strikes, peaceful protests and workers' demands were met with police repression, mass detentions and violations of physical integrity. Repression was being used against workers and the trade union movement, which private companies and the authorities were trying to break up.

77. With regard to Guatemala, the Commission had decided to continue consideration of the situation in Guatemala under agenda item 3 pending the conclusions of the Independent Expert and the outcome of Government-inspired negotiations. However, the human rights situation had not improved; on the contrary there had been a new upsurge in police violence as documented in the report of the Independent Expert, Mrs. Mónica Pinto (E/CN.4/1995/15) and those of other special rapporteurs.

78. However, considerable progress in negotiations between the Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) had been achieved at the beginning of 1994, including a Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights.

79. Nevertheless, despite the best efforts of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), the armed and security forces and paramilitary groups including the Civilian Self-Defence Patrols (PACs) continued to violate human rights.

80. In the circumstances, the situation in Guatemala should be considered under agenda item 12, and Mrs. Mónica Pinto should be appointed special rapporteur with a mandate to consider the human rights situation in Guatemala, assess government measures and, on behalf of the Commission on Human Rights, cooperate with MINUGUA, and submit a preliminary report to the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

81. Mr. GEBRIEL (World Federation of Democratic Youth) said that Colombia remained a country in which human dignity and the basic right to life were at stake. Although it seemed to be enjoying democratic rule, the major violators of human rights enjoyed impunity. The Government had failed to end the indiscriminate killing of its citizens by the military and the death squads. In view of Colombia's record, as documented in the joint report of Mr. Nigel Rodley and Mr. Bacre Waly Ndiaye (E/CN.4/1995/111), it should be given priority attention by the Commission.

82. In Nigeria, where the military had disregarded the results of the democratic elections in 1993 and imposed a dictatorship, the situation also required close scrutiny. Schools had been closed by the Government, partly out of fear that Nigerian youth would become involved in a pro-democracy movement. The Government's repression of the civilian population had forced many human rights activists and politicians into exile or to go underground. The Government of Nigeria should be prevailed upon to release all persons being held incommunicado, and the Commission should send a special rapporteur to document the most recent allegations of human rights violations.

83. The Sudan was ruled by emergency law which enabled the authorities to arrest and detain persons for unlimited periods without charge or trial, suspend newspapers, restrict travel and movement and otherwise limit the population's enjoyment of fundamental human rights. The authorities could act with impunity since the courts could not take up any complaint against acts or decisions based on emergency regulations. The independence of the judiciary had been completely eroded and the Executive had complete power over the appointment, dismissal, promotion and transfer of judges.

84. Despite the Government's apparent support for a peaceful solution to the war in the south of the country, it was in practice aiming at a military victory to impose a programme of Arabization and Islamization of the area, as part of its holy war. The regime decried its critics as enemies of Islam, in an effort to intimidate the world community and mask its human rights violations.

85. With regard to Turkey, there had been reports of systematic violations of human rights throughout 1994, as documented in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture (E/CN.4/1995/34), and of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (E/CN.4/1995/36). The situation in the south-eastern region was of particular concern. The Government continued to deny the linguistic and cultural rights of its Kurdish population and the army continued to launch armed offensives against Kurdish areas. Turkey had deliberately labelled as terrorists the Kurds who were striving for freedom, in an attempt to mislead the international community. He regretted the Turkish representative's declaration that the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) had been dealt a fatal blow and that the Government of Turkey had had every right to do so as it was a terrorist organization.

86. Ms. VENNE (Survival International) said that her organization was concerned by the fact that indigenous peoples in certain colonial countries were still denied the opportunity to decolonize and were subject to daily violations of basic human rights while colonial Governments continued with their colonization programmes and policies.

87. Mr. MIRIKI (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) said that the people of the Island of Bougainville welcomed the attention given by the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to their situation, as a result of which they had acquired an awareness of basic human rights principles. Commission resolution 1994/81 had led to a dialogue between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Interim Government. However, a failure by the Government of Papua New Guinea to respect the terms of the cease-fire

had led to a breakdown in negotiations. Racially-inspired human rights violations continued, medical aid was restricted and armed conflict was once again endemic.

88. The "Mirini Charter" was neither democratic nor representative, as it amounted to nothing more than a document signed by State-appointed representatives of Bougainville.

89. The Bougainville Interim Government regretted the failure of the Peace Conference which had been held in Arawa and the ensuing breakdown of the dialogue, which would lead to the continued military occupation of Bougainville and all that it entailed.

90. The brief deployment of the Pacific Peacekeepers in Bougainville was nothing less than an expensive show intended to placate the international community without addressing the problems faced within Bougainville itself. The same was true of the attendance at the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights of a large delegation from Papua New Guinea, and the hiring of a public relations firm to paint a rosy picture of the situation in Bougainville. The Government of Papua New Guinea should invite United Nations special rapporteurs and working groups, humanitarian organizations, and the international press to investigate the true situation in Bougainville. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should be requested to continue his good offices to ensure the full restoration of all fundamental freedoms and basic human rights of the people of Bougainville.

91. Mrs. FERRARO (United States of America) said that for years the United States had spoken out against various countries, including Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Burma, Zaire and North Korea, whose human rights records fell far short of the standards that the international community, as well as their treaty obligations, had set for them.

92. Despite the best efforts of the Commission on Human Rights and other human rights treaty bodies and organizations, the situation in many parts of the world remained unsatisfactory. However, that should not deter the international community as it could make an immediate difference in the near future in certain parts of the world.

93. With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where although all parties to the conflict were responsible for gross violations of human rights, the Bosnian Serbs had to take most of the blame. Seventy to ninety per cent of Bosnia was under their occupation. Ethnic cleansing should be stopped immediately and the fighting brought to an end. The persons responsible for the human rights situation in Bosnia should be held accountable for their actions. For that reason, the United States strongly supported the continuing negotiations to halt the bloodshed and also supported the War Crimes Tribunal which had been set up in The Hague to bring to justice those responsible for the genocide and other serious human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia.

94. With regard to Rwanda, the unprecedented violence and genocide in 1994 had driven 4 million people, over half of the population, from their homes. The United States fully supported the International Tribunal on Rwanda and

was cooperating closely with the Office of the Chief Prosecutor. It also supported continued funding for the human rights field office in Rwanda and the technical assistance programme which was being developed to help with the administration of justice. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur should also be extended.

95. The United States supported the efforts being made by the field office of the Centre for Human Rights in Burundi to promote peace and reconciliation, and would like the Centre's activities to be more widely known. It endorsed the mediation efforts of the United Nations Special Representative, as well as the confidence-building measures being taken by the Observer Group of the Organization of African Unity. The world community should act without delay if a humanitarian disaster in Burundi was to be averted.

96. Her delegation was also greatly concerned by the indiscriminate use of force against civilians in Chechnya. While it supported the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, it believed that a process of dialogue and reconciliation should be initiated without delay, and that delivery of humanitarian assistance should be accelerated.

97. Her delegation welcomed the ending of the long nightmare of apartheid in South Africa, as well as the improvement in the human rights situation in Haiti and the restoration of the country's democratically-elected President to power. It was also gratified by the progress made in El Salvador and Guatemala.

98. On the other hand, the situation in East Timor gave rise to concern: the Indonesian Government should take action to end the intimidation, torture and killings of civilians by the military. Similarly, China would not be able to assume its rightful place among the community of nations unless it put an end to the practice of preventing the free expression of political, social or religious views by arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, imprisonment and torture.

99. She had noted that, in the course of the current session, Cuba had adopted a deliberately divisive approach, designed to prevent the Commission from addressing serious human rights abuses. It was clear that the reason for those attempts was Cuba's own lamentable human rights record.

100. Over the past 30 years, Cyprus had suffered from inter-community conflicts, and had been tragically divided since 1974. She urged all States to join in supporting the continuing efforts of the United Nations to find an acceptable solution to that unfortunate situation.

101. She stressed that the Commission had an obligation to speak out on human rights abuses, so that even in the remotest corner of the world its voice would give hope to those who had been thrown into prison for telling the truth to tyrants.

102. Mr. AHLUWALIA (Liberation) said his organization was concerned by continuing reports of detentions, disappearances and deaths of Sikhs in the Punjab. Thirty-two per cent of persons detained by the Punjab police

since 1984 had died during interrogation as a result of torture. The Special Rapporteur on the question of torture had noted in his report to the Commission (E/CN.4/1995/34) that custodial torture in India was a widespread, if not endemic phenomenon, especially in the case of those detained for political reasons. The increased risk of human rights violations during incommunicado detention was widely acknowledged: under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act, detention for 15 days before review by an executive magistrate was still permitted, despite the fact that no one had been convicted of terrorism under that Act since its entry into force in 1987. India's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights required the repeal of such measures.

103. Although the Indian Government claimed that peace had returned to the Punjab, non-governmental organizations and special rapporteurs were still denied access to the region. Sixty-three thousand people were currently in preventive detention in India, over 17,000 of them in the Punjab alone, although no official state of emergency had been declared. There had been 373 habeas corpus applications by Sikhs to the High Court of Punjab in 1994, and the mail and telephone lines of political and human rights activists in the Punjab were censored.

104. The so-called "peace" was in fact enforced by armed police. It had been reported that over 1,300 militants had been killed in 1993, and over 600 in 1994. Some 400 persons had complained to the National Human Rights Commission of abuses in the region in a period of three days.

105. Liberation recommended that the Commission should consider the appointment of a special rapporteur for India, and that the Special Rapporteur on Minorities, in his proposed visit to India, should consider the particular difficulties faced by Sikhs. The High Commissioner for Human Rights should seek to facilitate talks between Sikh leaders and the Indian Government with a view to safeguarding the political and cultural rights of Sikhs in the Punjab.

106. He noted that human rights violations in Turkey had increased over the past 10 years. In 1994, over 1,200 people had been arrested and 14,000 detained for political reasons. Three hundred and thirty cases of involuntary disappearances and over 600 extrajudicial executions had been reported. Over 2,000 Kurdish villages had been burnt down or evacuated by the security forces in the past three years, and human rights defenders and peace mediators, including four members of the Turkish Parliament, had been persecuted. Liberation requested the Commission to urge the Turkish Government to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish State.

107. In Indonesia, the actions of the Government towards union members and the lack of impartiality of the judiciary gave rise to concern. Following a peaceful demonstration in April 1994, 84 members of the Prosperity Trade Union had been convicted on charges of criminal damage and incitement to riot, and the Union's leader had been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment. Liberation urged the Commission to ask the Indonesian delegation to allow the Special Rapporteur on the independence of the judiciary to visit the State, and to impress on the Indonesian Government the need to guarantee the rights of workers.

108. Mr. NABI AZAD (India) said that although most nations were now convinced of the fundamental importance of human rights, they did not all take practical steps to promote and protect them. The Commission should encourage States to be more active in that regard.

109. The question of Cyprus continued to be a matter of concern for the international community, and he hoped that the efforts of the Secretary-General would pave the way for a viable and permanent solution.

110. Any approach to the Commission which was inspired not by a desire to protect human rights, but rather by blatant territorial ambitions, deserved to be condemned. With reference to the question of Jammu and Kashmir, he pointed out that that State had become an integral part of India following the signing of an instrument of accession which had been ratified by an elected constituent assembly. Pakistan's attempts to prove otherwise thus flew in the face of reality.

111. Having failed in its attempt to annex the state of Jammu and Kashmir by force, Pakistan had in recent years turned to the international organizations as a means of achieving its objectives. However, the sole cause of the State's problems was Pakistan's action in sponsoring terrorism and fuelling secessionism. While Pakistan called for self-determination for Jammu and Kashmir, it was at the same time denying basic rights to the inhabitants of the northern areas of Kashmir, where no elections had yet been held.

112. Pakistan's terrorist campaign had included the systematic killing of prominent politicians and opinion-makers, abduction and death threats against newspaper owners, intimidation of lawyers and members of the judiciary, and killings in minority communities aimed at changing the demographic pattern of a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Human rights were being relentlessly violated, and the terrorists were even attempting to impose religious fundamentalism on the people by force.

113. In the face of such attacks, the Indian Government was making every effort to create conditions conducive to a restoration of democratic political processes. It was promoting economic and development activities and was revising electoral rolls and delineating constituencies under a new election law. In 1994, over 1,000 militants, including a number of prominent secessionist leaders, had been released. India was committed to a policy of openness and transparency in Jammu and Kashmir, as elsewhere in the country.

114. He stressed that India was no enemy of Pakistan, but on the contrary wished to entertain harmonious relations with that country. However, India could not be expected to remain a silent spectator while Pakistan exported terrorism to Jammu and Kashmir. His Government was determined to take all measures to protect the human rights of the people of that State, rights which were now so flagrantly being attacked, and to defend the unity and territorial integrity of India.

115. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) said that Bosnia and Herzegovina had for three years been the victim of military aggression as part of a racist policy of ethnic

cleansing. Mass genocide and crimes against humanity had been committed in an attempt to empty large parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina of its inhabitants, and to distort the country's cultural and religious identity.

116. His delegation believed that that situation should have been given more attention by the Commission in the course of the current session, and that a special agenda item should have been devoted to the subject, as had been done at the forty-ninth session of the Commission in February 1993.

117. Ever since the beginning of the crisis, Egypt's position had been that a strong stand should be taken against the aggressors, including the use of force, which was provided for under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In order to enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to exercise its legitimate right of individual or collective self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter, that country should be exempted from the arms embargo imposed on the countries of the former Yugoslavia under Security Council resolution 713.

118. Any settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be in line with the principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions, so that aggression and the acquisition of land by force could be decisively condemned. It was also important that the gains made by the Serbs as a result of their aggression should not be legitimized, since recognition would be tantamount to rewarding the aggressor for flouting international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

119. The seventh summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held in Casablanca in December 1994 had confirmed the Conference's position in the matter. In addition, there had been a meeting in January 1995 in Geneva between the Islamic Conference Contact Group and the Five Nation Contact Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina, in an attempt to coordinate efforts to achieve a just and peaceful settlement. He hoped that further meetings between the two groups would result in a solution that would permit implementation of the international peace plan which had already been accepted by the Bosnian side, but persistently rejected by the Serbs.

120. Egypt fully supported all the measures suggested by the Special Rapporteur on the situation in the former Yugoslavia to put an end to the criminal acts perpetrated by the Serbian side. The international community, as represented by the Security Council, should take a firm stand against all such acts, notably by halting the blockade preventing access of humanitarian aid convoys to United Nations safe zones.

121. His delegation welcomed the establishment of an international tribunal to try war crimes and crimes against humanity under Security Council resolution 809, and urged that the necessary resources should be made available so that the tribunal could begin work and bring those responsible to justice without delay.

122. He urged the Commission to adopt a resolution explicitly identifying the aggressors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, recognizing ethnic cleansing as collective genocide, calling for the release of all detainees and for the

punishment of those responsible for crimes against humanity, and recognizing the right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes and retrieve their property in accordance with international law.

123. The crisis that had erupted in Rwanda in April 1994 had added mass genocide to the other tragedies being experienced by countries of the African continent, and he commended the programme drawn up by the High Commissioner for Refugees to remedy that situation. More consultation and coordination between the various United Nations agencies involved was needed, so that action could be effective and maximum benefit derived from limited resources. Human rights monitors should be sent to the area without delay, and the investigation process should be speeded up so that those responsible for crimes against humanity could be brought to trial.

124. Although Egypt was opposed to interference in the internal affairs of countries on the pretext of protecting human rights, it was deeply concerned at the destruction and loss of life currently being inflicted on the Chechen people. He urged that a peaceful solution should be found to the problem, which would include the immediate cessation of all military action. In that regard, he welcomed the statement by the Chairman of the Commission on 27 February, expressing the hope that the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights would make every effort to safeguard the human rights of the Chechen people.

The meeting was suspended at 10.05 p.m. and resumed at 10.25 p.m.